Mat-Su Monitor

October 2014 VOLUME 38 NUMBER 1

The dinner hall where C.S. Lewis and his students ate and met. Dr. Fox is in the front at the left.

What does Dr. Fox say?

By Michelle Sharpe

Mat Su College professor speaks at Oxford University

Mat-Su's very own Dr. Deborah Fox had the opportunity to speak abroad about something that she's always been very passionate about, British Literature: "It was a real honor for me. Because I'm a British Lit fan, always have been. I mean, that's my main love."

I got the chance to interview her, and get the inside scoop on how she got invited and what she got to speak about during her time abroad.

Interviewer: *So, you got to speak at Oxford?*

Dr. Fox: Yeah, but Oxford is made up of almost 40 different colleges.

Continue on Page 10

New Rain Garden Decorates College Campus with Ecosystem in Mind

by Jacob Mann

This summer, a new addition to the Mat-Su College campus was put in place - a rain garden. A spectrum of 25 types of perennial flowers now colors the southeast entry to Snodgrass Hall behind the building near the trailhead. Planted to thrive in the Alaskan climate, swaying in the breeze, the flowers paint the landscape as an example of low-impact development.

Continue on Page 11

Students at Mat-Su College work hard to install a raingarden and improve the environment.

Get involved with YOUR paper!

The Mat-Su Monitor is open to students of all experience levels. A paper like ours always needs writers, artists, graphic designers, advertisement coordinators, photographers, and more (maybe you can contribute something we haven't even thought of)!

Meetings: Mondays and Thursdays, 12:00 to 12:50, in OLB 214 (upstairs in library).

Upcoming events:

October 24: 7 PM-10PM. Halloween Dance in the Mat-Su College Cafe.
October 27: Spring schedule and textbooks posted on UAOnline.
October 27-31: Spirit Week.

Monday, October 27: Dress like a pirate day.
Tuesday, October 28: Dress like a zombie day.
Wednesday, October 29: dress like a superhero/supervillain day.
Thursday, October 30: Dress like a Disney character day.
Friday, October 31: Halloween.

October 28 and 29: 9 AM-4 PM: UAA School of Engineering representative on campus; call Student Services at 745-9762 for more information or to make an individual appointment.
October 28-30: Representative from UAA Allied Health will be on campus to talk about careers in fire-fighting, emergency services, dental assisting, dental hygiene, radiologic technology, medical assisting, physical therapy, and phlebotomy. Contact Student Services at 745-9762 for more information.
November 1: Last day to apply for fall graduation.
November 3: UAA College of Business and Public Policy representative on campus; those interested in degrees in accounting, economics, management, logistics, finances, small business administration, and so on should call Student Services at 745-9762 for more information.
November 10-13: Spring semester registration opens; exact date determined by number of credits already obtained.
November 11: Noon: Veterans Day flag-folding ceremony at the entrance of the FSM building, followed by a reception.
November 14: Withdrawal deadline for fall semester.
November 26: No classes, campus open.
November 27-29: No classes, campus closed.

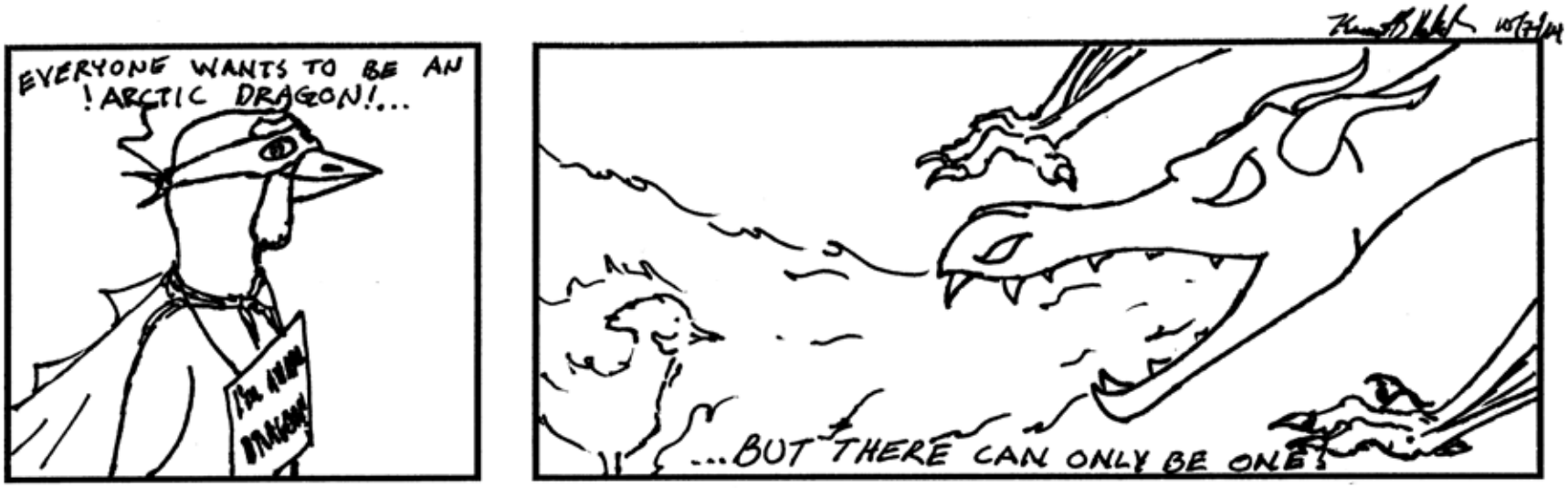
Pictured left to right are Charter members David Johnson, Keith Asche and Delena Johnson; Director of Marketing at Mat-Su College Courtney Brooke Smith and Assistant Vice Chancellor for Alumni Relations Rachel Morse at the official signing of the Mat-Su Area Alumni Chapter

Alumni BBQ and Alumni Chapter Formed

Matanuska-Susitna College hosted the third annual Alumni BBQ on July 8 in the MSC café. Delicious hamburgers were grilled up and alumni and their families brought delicious side dishes for sharing. You can view photos of the event on our Pinterest site!

As a result of this event and eager alumni coming together again, we are excited to announce the formation of the first ever Mat-Su Area Alumni Chapter – the newest addition to the UAA Alumni Association. The group will be responsible for holding at least one meeting annually, participate in the annual Alumni Assembly and host one event per year. The official signing took place at Vagabond Blues in Palmer. All MSC graduates, as well as UAA graduates, are invited to join the chapter!

If you are interested, please email marketing@matsu.alaska.edu.



HAVE SOME QUESTIONS? TRY ONE OF MAT-SU COLLEGE'S LEARNING SERVICES.

Online Tutoring: UAA Consortium Library 1pm-midnight. Limited hours per student.

www.tutor.com/alaska
www.tutor.com/military for military families who qualify

Khan Academy: Videos (math, science, economics, history) http://www.khanacademy.org/

Foreign Language: http://libraries.mangolanguages.com/alaska/start (includes English)

ON MAT-SU CAMPUS AT THE LEARNING CENTER*

OLB 121 745-9713

WRITING
Mon 12:30-3:00
Wed 12:30-3:00

MATH
Mon 9:30-5:00
Tues 11:00-3:00 & 3:30-7:30
Wed 9:30-1:00 & 2:30-5:00
Thur 10:00-3:00
Fri 10:00-3:00

ASL
1:00-5:00

BIOLOGY
10:00-12:00

*Tutoring is available only for students enrolled in MSC courses Fall 2014. Hours are subject to change. Tutors available Sept 8 - Dec 12. Please call ahead to make an appointment.
http://matsu.alaska.edu/offices/the-learning-center/tutoring/

ART DEPARTMENT EVENTS

Home of Infinite Possibilities

STUDENT ART SHOW
Nov. 21 - Dec. 11, 2014

FACULTY ART SHOW
Oct. 15 – Nov.19, 2014

Juried Art Show.
Drop off: January 6 to 8, 2015

Show: Jan.14 to Feb. 11, 2015

Juried art show opened to all artists, in any medium, from around the valley. Rules and application will be posted on the Mat-Su UAA Art Department Facebook page or can be picked up outside of the Mat-Su Art department office.

High School Portfolio Contest

Portfolio review day Feb. 4, 2015 Drop off dates Feb. 9-12, 2015 Winner announced: Feb. 18 Show Feb. 18– Mar. 18, 2015

This contest is open to high school students. Students have the opportunity to be awarded a one-year full tuition scholarship to Mas-Su College.

Seniors only

Rules and application will be posted on the Mat-Su UAA Art Department Facebook page or can be picked up outside of the Mat-Su Art department office.

Dr. Felicia M. Desimini,
Assistant Professor
Art Department Coordinator
Director, Machetanz Arts Festival
Office: 745-9755
fdesimini@matsu.alaska.edu

http://matsu.alaska.edu/departments/fine-arts/

Career Services

Did you know *that Mat-Su College offers career services for students at any point in their education career*? My name is Karen Backlund and I've been the Career Development Coordinator at Mat-Su College since October 2007. The resources available to you include:

- Career assessments (Myers Briggs Type Indicator and Strong Interest Inventory) provide information on your personality and interests as they relate to college and career
- Career exploration tools (Alaska Career Information System – AKCIS and others) provide information on majors, education and training resources, occupations, and industry trends
- Assistance adjusting to career and life changes
- Referral to other organizations for funding and other services
- Job search, resume, and interviewing tips

You can get more information about career advising and other resources at: *http://matsu.alaska.edu/office/student-services/career-advising/*. Local employers also call our office to request assistance getting the word out about their offerings: *http://matsu.alaska.edu/office/student-services/career-advising/career-opportunities/*.

I look forward to writing a regular column detailing these and other services. Call 745-9762 to schedule an appointment with me.

Why Create a Budget?

Creating a budget for yourself, especially while in college, can save you time, money and stress in the long run. How will you know the amount of loans to borrow, how many hours you need to work, or if you can afford that extra class if you don't do a budget first to determine your funds going in and out? Money affects all areas of our lives. If you're stressed about your finances, other parts of your life will suffer. This is especially true as a student. So try creating a budget, it will help you focus on more important things... like graduating!

Budgeting Tips

- *You're in college, so live like a college student!*
- *Determine what is essential in your life (your needs) versus what would be nice to have (your wants). Try to focus on your needs and spend money on those.*
- *Find a budgeting technique that works for you, and stick with it.*
- *Don't be too hard on yourself. Don't give up!*
- *Estimate a budget for an entire year rather than just a month or semester.*
- *Taking out loans as a "back-up" or cushion is usually not the best idea. If you have the money, you'll spend it, perhaps without needing to do so and the interest that will accumulate on the loans is not worth it! Determine your needs vs. wants to figure out the least amount of loans you can take out to survive while in school.*

Budgeting Apps

There are lots of apps out there that can help you budget better. Some are free, some are paid, and they vary with amounts of bells and whistles included. Check these out to see what might work for you:

Free

Mint – mint.com
Level Money – levelmoney.com
BudgetEase – budgetease.com
LearnVest – learnvest.com
GoodBudget – goodbudget.com

Paid

iExpenseIt - www.fyimobileware.com
You Need a Budget – youneedabudget.com
MoneyWiz – moneywizapp.com
Spendee – spendeeapp.com

If you'd like more tips on Budgeting, as well as other Financial Literacy topics like Credit and Student Loans, be sure to visit *www.uaa.alaska.edu/financialaid/financial-lit.cfm* .

Service Learning at Mat-Su College

by Staff

Around 1900, a French artist drew a series of illustrations depicting life in the year 2000. The future classroom scene is remarkable. It shows a teacher pouring books into something akin to a meat grinder. From it, wires run to helmets atop students' heads. Sitting in rigid poses that appear unnatural nowadays, these students seem to be absorbing every last detail of the electrified books.

Pity the artist. This classroom hasn't come to be (neither has his whale bus – visit *http://bit.ly/1h9eIK4* to see all the predictions). And it's not just the technology that seems silly; the idea that students should passively absorb information is badly outdated. Today, educators push students to apply what they learn, often by getting them out into the community and tackling real-world needs. Educators call this service learning.

To get a sense of what service learning is, I spoke with Mat-Su College Career Development and Service Learning Coordinator Karen Backlund. She defines a service learning assignment as one that "combines three critical elements: a service project clearly related to academic objectives of the course, service activities that meet a recognized community need, and an opportunity for students to reflect on what they have learned." What does this mean in practice?

To find out, I spoke to Judy Gette, whose Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies course has incorporated service learning. As Judy explains it, "the service learning project connects what we're discussing on paper and shows how it works in the real world." For instance, two of her students are working with the American Lung Association to provide information on the dangers of smoking while pregnant. "They've been putting together information that they used at the women and children's health fair at the hospital. The two students were there and had a table, a PowerPoint, and answered questions from people." Other students worked with the National Organization of Women to bring to campus a Lunafest film festival and a showing of the film The Invisible War, which touches on sexual assault in the military. Another pair of students worked with MyHouse to develop a five-week curriculum on life skills for homeless young women.

Service learning isn't just for courses whose content focuses on social ills. Examples from across the country demonstrate this. One public speaking course has students give elementary school students hour-long presentations on topics such as compassion, cooperation, and courtesy. A statistics class helps non-profits develop statistical reports used to apply for grant funding. A chemistry class provides judges and presenters for elementary school science fairs. Here at Mat-Su College, courses ranging from Refrigeration and Heating to Business have incorporated service learning.

Instructors interested in service learning, or community members with service learning project ideas, can contact Karen Backlund at 746-9319 or krbacklund@matsu.alaska.edu.

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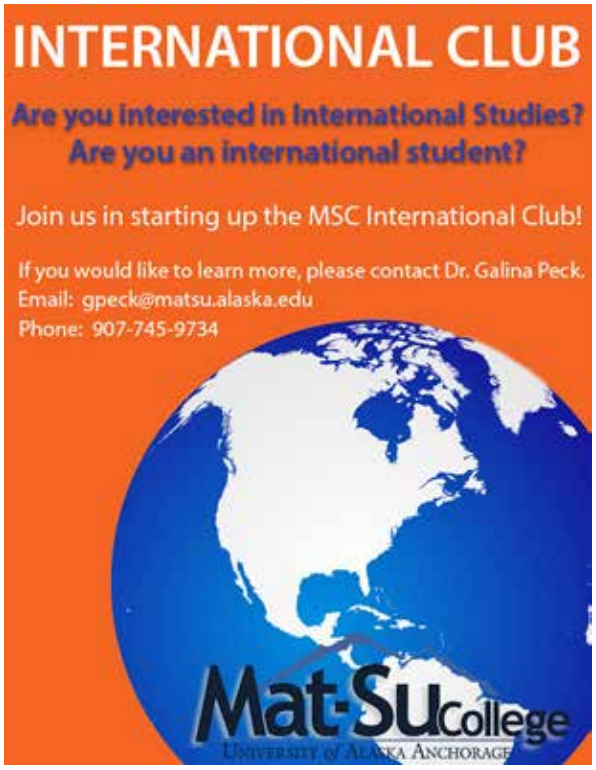
Mat-Su Carbon Crew helps the MSC Library Recycle nearly half a ton of periodicals.


INTERNATIONAL CLUB
Are you interested in International Studies?
Are you an international student?
Join us in starting up the MSC International Club!
If you would like to learn more, please contact Dr. Galina Peck.
Email: gpeck@matsu.alaska.edu
Phone: 907-745-9734
Mat-Su College
University of Alaska Anchorage

Sharpe's Spooky Movie Guide:

Alaska, a place where the nights are longer and spookier! Unfortunately, the nights are also getting colder. That's okay, what better way to spend these long nights than watching some horror movies with your friends? Looking for some good horror movie recommendations? Search no further. I have a few horror movies that you may enjoy.

1. *The Shining* (Jack Nickolson, Shelly Duvall): HERE'S JOHNNY!!! This 1980 Stanley Kubrick classic, based loosely on Stephan King's novel is sure to please the horror and non-horror fans alike. Set in a secluded (haunted) hotel, the Torrence family must deal with typical things that come with house sitting a gigantic hotel; snow storms, loss of communications, writer's block, even worse writer's block, alcohol, and ghosts. Lots of creepy ghosts. This is a great movie to watch in the dark on a snowy night.

2. *The Descent* (2005): This horror movie is sure to disturb the audience in some way or another. If the claustrophobic spelunking scenes don't make you writhe in your seat in discomfort, then those carnivorous cave dwelling creatures are sure to do the job. This movie is gruesome and is truly creepy on every level. This is definitely a movie to watch in the dark… If you can.

3. *The Innocents* (1961): If you are in the mood for a more psychological movie, give this a chance. Based on the 1898 novella The Turn of the Screw, this movie follows the story of a Victorian governess taking the job of watching two adorable children, whose last governess mysteriously died. This is a slow burning movie that leaves the audience asking whether the governess was crazy or if the kids were really creepy? Either way, it's worth checking out.

4. *Rosemary's Baby* (1968): Those 60's movies. They loved making movies that debated whether or not the leading ladies were really insane or not. Girls, believe me though, the most unsettling thing about this movie is not the fact that the main character is carrying the spawn of Satan, but rather how the people who she trusts most are the ones who ultimately betray her and make her feel insane. Moral of the story: If you find that you're pregnant, RUN!!!

5. *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (2007): You know, after all of those other movies, maybe everyone could do with a nice musical, starring Johnny Depp, Helena Bohem Carter, and Alan Rickman. This is a delightful musical that centers on a friendly barber who only wants to give everyone a nice, close shave. . . Before slitting people's throats and having his friend turn them into delicious pie. Quality family movie. (Not really)

6. *Hocus Pocus* (1993): No Halloween is complete without watching this classic movie about three witch sisters being raised from the dead by three unknowing youths. Chances are, you've seen this movie, but you can never watch this movie too many times.

Honorable Mentions:

Rocky Horror Picture Show- If you are in the mood for an odd cult classic about alien transvestites, give this a try.

The Exorcist- Described as one of the scariest movies ever created, this movie is sure to entertain, and unsettle everyone in the room.

Tucker and Dale Vs. Evil- This horror comedy turns a genre on its head in a very entertaining fashion. Definitely check this movie out if you like gory comedy.

If you do not feel like watching a movie, but feel like binge watching a new show that features some pretty scary episodes, give Supernatural a try. The X-Files is a classic series as well, and both are guaranteed to creep you out.

I'm a Fighter: Dead or Alive 5 Ultimate Review

By: Dr. Albert Wily

Since the first entry in 1996, gamers have taken pretty quickly to the Dead or Alive series' robust fighting system and colorful cast of characters. Fast forward to 2013 and Dead or Alive is still kicking. Sadly, one defining feature and selling point of the games was the skimpiness of the female fighters' attires. The series has been accused of being obsessed with showing off its women (two beach volleyball games with no combat didn't help matters). But true fighting game fans will be able to look past this (or not…) to find a truly deep fighting and entertainment experience.

Dead or Alive 5 Ultimate is the "complete" edition of the fifth game, and includes features and characters not seen in the original release. For Team Ninja's credit, the women of Dead or Alive really do have depth and character to them. The marketing campaign for gamers to take their series seriously again because "I'm a Fighter" seems to have paid off. The fan-service of skimpy outfits and shirtless men are still around, but has been significantly toned down for a dark, gritty rough and tumble experience.

The story has also taken a darker turn and shows that the past four games were worth paying attention to for the plot. The two newcomer fighters both get ample screen time while main character Kasumi still looks to bring down the shady tyrants behind her brother's disappearance. All of the returning and new characters get their own time to shine in the game's story mode, which ties together nicely in the end but still throws in a major twist. The fighting system has also never been better. Everything is just as fans remember it. If you've never played Dead or Alive before this is an excellent time to start. The good news for veterans is that none of the complexity or depth has been taken away. You can go into the robust training modes to brush up on your fighting skills, or learn new moves. And, if you are feeling so bold, you can try and complete each character's moveset for bragging rights. This does not leave new players out in the cold, however. Each tutorial is easy to follow, and you can pick and choose a different fighter at any time if you want to practice different fighting styles. One big mechanic that has also helped D.O.A stay head to head with the competition is the Tag Team mode. Both players pick two characters and duke it out to see who has the better team. D.O.A mixes this up with the ability to tag in at any time. It also lets you continue a combo by switching to your partner as you're in the middle of it. This not only opens up new ways to fight but provides an almost endless combination of fighting styles with characters that might not have anything to do with each other!

YOUR CLUB'S AD COULD BE HERE!

CONTACT THE MAT-SU MONITOR FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Stop by the library and ask for Micah Muer or call him at 745-9728

Happy Birthday Alaska!

by Jacob Mann

October 18th is Alaska's birthday. The state will turn 147 this month. Alaskans can embrace their state pride during the official U.S holiday: Alaska Day. The holiday commemorates the formal U.S purchase of Alaska from Russia which occurred on March 30th 1867. The official ceremony eventually took place in October when the Commissioners arrived in Sitka. As said on alaskafestival.org, "The Russian Double Eagle was lowered for the last time, and the Stars and Stripes made their first appearance over Alaskan soil in a ceremony formalizing the transfer of the territory of Alaska from Tsarist Russia to the United States of America at the incredible purchase price of approximately two cents per acre."

In 1954, Sitka began celebrating the anniversary with an annual festival. A non-profit organization, Alaska Day Festival Incorporated, emerged to create an event in order to eternalize October 18th as Alaska's official birthday.

By proclamation of the mayor, "All males are urged to grow beards and all women to dress in the styles of 1867 for the festival period." The festival takes place over several days. Those attending can participate in a costume ball which offers prizes for the best historical costumes. There's usually a variety of activities leading up to the event to attend which include the Coast Guard air-sea rescue demonstration, tea at the Pioneers home, and musical performances. When Alaska Day itself arrives, multiple military branches parade through Sitka's business district alongside school bands, marching units, and an assortment of festival-goers in costumes. The parade concludes atop Castle Hill to commemorate the 1867 exchange in a re-enactment with a flag swapping—emulating the historic day.

The Alaska day festival has grown in popularity over the years and has attracted bigger crowds from across the state each year.

Sitka is over 570 miles away from the Mat-Su Valley or Anchorage, so for those who do not want to make the long trip over to Baranof Island but still wish to celebrate being an Alaskan can do so by other means. Alaskans (with the ability) can preempt No-Shave November and start growing a beard for October 18th. Perhaps other simple acts can stir up state pride like wearing a flannel - the Alaskan tuxedo, or one could celebrate with an outdoor adventure. Hiking, 4-wheeling, fishing, drinking local beers or wines, or whatever seems fit the Alaskan theme. October 18th is 17 days away from the General Election (Nov. 4th), registering to vote could prove to be a responsible way of taking state pride. One could brush up on Alaskan history or Native Culture.

How will you spend you Alaska day? Feel free to post a photo with a caption describing your method of celebration or share a story that makes you glad to be an Alaskan at the Mat-Su College Facebook page @ https://www.facebook.com/MSCDragons.

Alaskan Halloween *by Jacob Mann*

Ask Sophia

Welcome to Ask Sophia, a new advice column that will appear regularly in the Mat-Su Monitor. If you have a question you'd like to see answered submit it in the Ask Sophia box in the lobby of the FSM building.

Q. **Dear Sophia:** My best friend's stupid dogs poop in the house instead of in the grass. I'm tired of dodging turds!

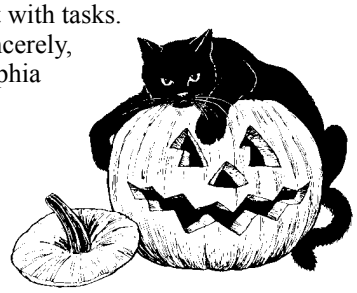
A. Dear frustrated friend, Might I suggest that you ask your best friend to pick up his/her dog's poop? Or, perhaps, if he/she is not living with you that he/she leave his/her dog at home? I hope you get it all figured out.
Sincerely,
Sophia

Q. **Dear Sophia:** I used the ATM for the first time today -- THREE freaking dollars per transaction!? Doesn't MSC have enough clout to tell MVFCU, "That's too high -- do better for our students!?" How about $1 per trans.? Or maybe even FREE since MVFCU is getting free advertising space on campus.

A. Dear student,
The reason for the transaction fee is because the ATM belongs to MVFCU, therefore MVFCU users need not pay a transaction fee—only outside bank users. However, that does not help your frustrations. I suggest talking to the Mat-Su College Student Government to see if there is something they can do or what actions you might be able to take to either remove or lessen the fee or perhaps even bring your own bank's ATM to the campus. I hope this helps!
Sincerely,
Sophia

Q. Dear Sophia: My little brothers are both adults now but still don't have jobs. They both live with our parents. They eat all their food. Their bills are also paid by my parents. When mom and dad need help from them it's the end of the world! I pick up all the slack! Some things never change!

A. **Dear slack picker-upper,**
I can imagine how frustrating your situation must be to you. I suggest encouraging your little brothers to get jobs--don't give them a hard time or nag, just encourage. By doing so, they might feel as if it is their own choices and not because they have to get jobs. Also, find out ways to make them subconsciously see that they are being burdens on your parents. Perhaps then they will feel more inclined to get jobs or at least help out with tasks.
Sincerely,
Sophia



WORD SEARCH . Circle the words in the list and the left-over letters will reveal the secret message.

G	H	T	A	Y	N	E	D	P	C	P	T	G	N	Y
H	O	A	A	I	K	R	I	A	L	A	N	R	O	L
N	W	O	L	C	A	O	N	N	E	O	R	I	R	S
W	N	B	S	C	K	D	O	R	E	F	E	M	D	T
P	O	I	U	E	Y	C	T	P	L	G	T	R	L	S
G	U	L	E	C	B	R	A	O	S	W	N	E	U	O
E	A	M	O	T	O	U	W	L	L	I	A	A	A	H
M	E	R	P	K	S	E	M	L	B	T	L	P	C	G
I	N	E	C	K	R	N	A	P	Y	C	O	E	E	P
R	N	I	I	E	I	F	E	R	S	H	K	R	E	H
G	R	D	W	R	R	N	O	K	A	E	C	Y	S	A
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What does Dr. Fox Say?
Continued from Front Page:

Interviewer: *Which one did you go to?*

Dr. Fox: I stayed in two, I got there early so I got to stay at Wadham College . . . and then I stayed at Magdalen College, which is the college that C.S. Lewis actually taught in.

Interviewer: *Were you invited to stay at Oxford?*

Dr. Fox: I was. I sent a proposal into a society that I have belonged to for many years. It's called the George MacDonald society. [MacDonald] was a Scottish author who lived from 1824-1905. He started off as a pastor, and he got kind of disinvited from the church. He had this very expansive view of salvation. [The Church] wanted to be a little more exclusive. [MacDonald] ended up writing novels, but he was more known for his fairy tales. [His stories] were pre-cursers to the [stories] that we would know today. Anyway, George MacDonald was the one that I did my dissertation on. So I wrote my doctoral work on his fictional novels for adults. And this particular conference that was being held was about the Victorian roots of fantasy writing, and because MacDonald had written fairy tales that spanned from children to adults, he's considered to be one of the fathers of the fantasy genre for adults. So that's what I ended up doing. I sent in a proposal, and my proposal was accepted. So that's why I went to Oxford.

Interviewer: *How many people did you get to talk to?*

Dr. Fox: Well, there were about 75 people all in all at the conference. And then the session that I spoke at, there were about 25 or so. A lot of them were other scholars, some of them were grad students who were also interested in MacDonald, and then some of them were just enthusiasts who were interested in MacDonald as well as C.S. Lewis. The title of the Conference was "Informing the Inklings" and the Inklings were J. R. R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Owen Barfield, etc. The Inklings were affiliated with Oxford; mostly lecturers and teacher who met on a pretty regular basis to share their work with each other. This is why this conference was being held at Oxford.

Interviewer: *So, How was your stay there?*

Dr. Fox: It was great! I explored Oxford top to bottom. . . It was a lot of fun. I met a lot of nice people.

Interviewer: *Have you ever spoken abroad before this?*

Dr. Fox: No.

Interviewer: *I hear that you're teaching Brit Lit this semester, was anything that you spoke about in your conference in your lessons?*

Dr. Fox: Yeah, I'm bringing a lot of Tolkien into my British lit class, because Tolkien was an expert in Anglo-Saxon literature. I'm leaning very heavily on Tolkien this semester. We'll also be talking about J.K. Rowling. My next thing is that I'm trying to finish up my alterations to my paper that I offered there and they're planning on publishing in the near future. I have an October deadline that I'm pressing to get done.

YOUR STORY COULD BE HERE!

Write an interesting paper for a class? Experience something on campus that you want to share with others? Have a strong opinion about an issue? Just want to share a poem or short story? Now any student can submit content through the Monitor's webpage! Just Search "Monitor" on the college website to find it.

Rain Garden
Continued from Front Page

A rain garden is a shallow, man-made basin that supports native plants with runoff water from places such as a roof, storm pipe, sidewalk or driveway. The idea is to utilize water that would normally wash away and simply steer toward a garden—giving it life from the rain. The flow of water is slowed down by the soil inside the retention and filtration zone, allowing it to seep into the ground naturally

"*This allows us to ultimately improve the health of the groundwater,*" says Dr. Polly Bass, Assistant Professor of Natural Science. An interview with Bass over the newly planted rain garden revealed how it came to be and what it means for the Mat-Su College Campus and perhaps, the bigger picture—Alaska's ecosystem.

Shortly after the addition of the paramedic wing the land behind Snodgrass was paved, leaving a new parking lot and an island of green.

"*In terms of ecosystem health, habitat... it's not really the best scenario or the healthiest alternative... The pavement increases run off, it doesn't allow the soil to interact with the air above as readily. It decreases habitat availability—all sorts of wildlife microhabitats.*" Bass says.

"*Pavement doesn't allow for natural infiltration and processing that takes place when it rains, when pollutants enter the groundwater—it runs off, it needs time to process for petroleum residues plastic residues, hydrocarbons even soil particulates to settle out. The less time you allow for that to happen, the more pavement you introduce to a system. The more impermeable surfaces you have. So the water runs off quickly, it runs off in greater quantity and the entire velocity causes more erosion.*"

The rain garden serves as an attractive landscape feature. In terms of ecological benefits it can potentially lower water pollution, slow the rate of stream flooding in developed areas and replenish groundwater. However, there is still much research needed to prove how effective rain gardens truly are. Environmental Studies students on campus now have the opportunity to study the long term effects and attempt to connect the data to the bigger picture. The aid of knowledgeable staff, experts and environmental supporters will carry the ongoing "natural lab" forward. In the meantime, we at least have something pretty to look at.

Funding for the garden was provided by the Valley Garden Club.

The club cooperates with other agencies in furthering the interest of conservation, civic beauty, and roadside beautification. The Mat-Su College was awarded grant money from the club's annual Community Beautification Grant. Further support for the project is credited to the efforts of the Mat-Su Borough, Valley Community for Recycling Solutions, Mat-Su Conservation Services, Lawn Tech, Mat-Su Carbon Crew, and the Mat-Su College Environmental Geology and Environmental Science student.

Mat-Su College Rain Garden in full bloom.

Business owners!

The Mat-Su Monitor is a great place to advertise your business or event. The Monitor has a wide circulation, with thousands of copies inserted in the Frontiersman and distributed thoughrout the Valley. We also have low rates:

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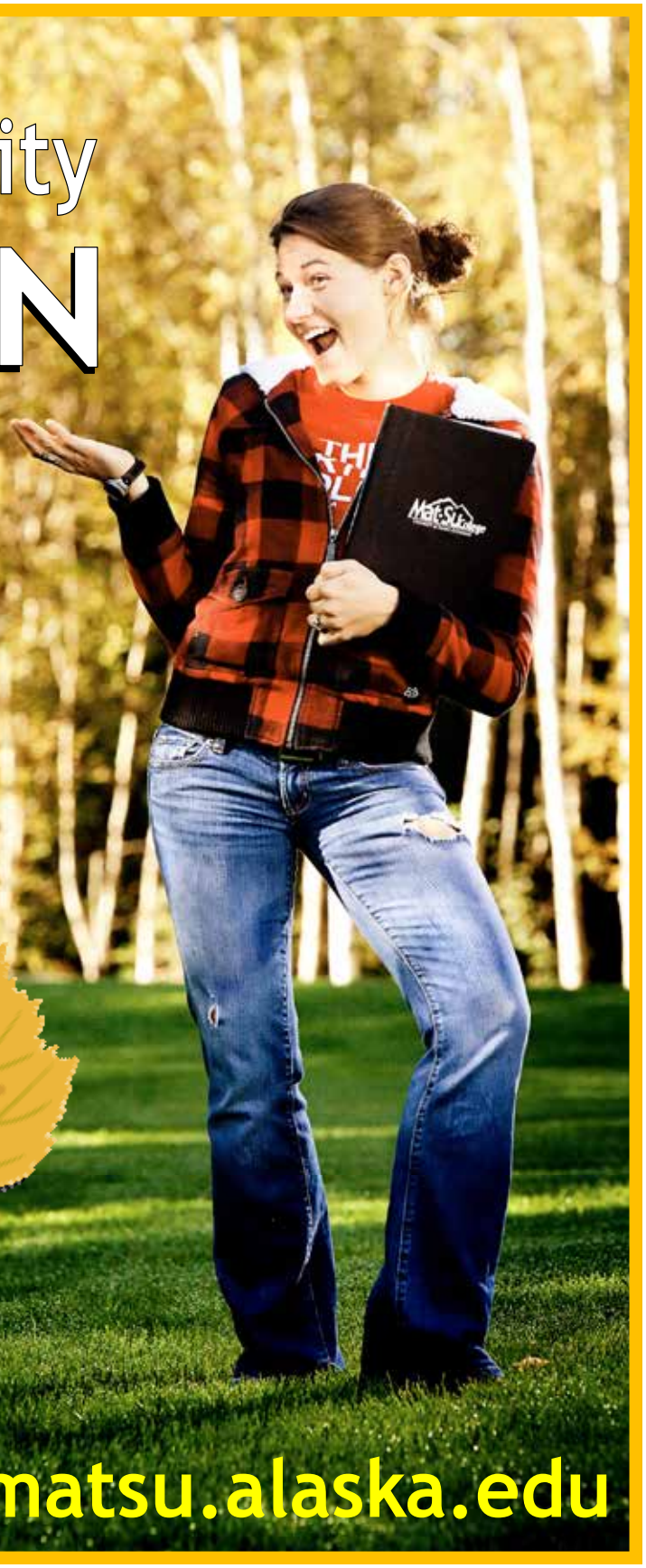

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